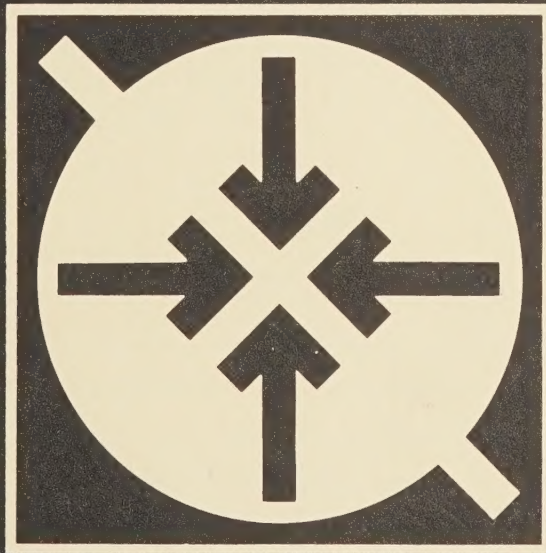


Am

Newsletter

Blissymbolics
Communication
Institute

July 1981 No. 24





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BLISSYMBOLICS COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE

The purpose of this Newsletter is to publish articles and news items concerning Blissymbolics which utilizes visual symbols as an augmentative to communication. The many applications of Blissymbolics include the following:

1. Communication Difficulties
2. Cognitive and Language Development
3. Reading
4. International Communication

SUBSCRIPTIONS The Newsletter is available through associate membership in BCI. \$25.00 per year. Apply to:

Blissymbolics Communication Institute
350 Rumsey Road
Toronto, Ontario
Canada, M4G 1R8

ARTICLES Readers are encouraged to contribute letters and articles in order to share their symbol experiences. Write to:

BCI Newsletter
Mrs. Barbara Rush
Editor
64 Magnolia Drive
Hamilton, Ontario
Canada, L9C 5T2

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FROM THE EDITOR

Many fine articles were received for this July Newsletter. Indeed, a few have been held over for a future issue due to space limitations. Thanks are extended to all those who have been willing to take the time to share their symbol experiences with us.

Two articles require some background information. Elizabeth Helfman announces in From Book to Book that her new book, Blissymbolics - Speaking Without Speech is now published. It makes excellent, informative and entertaining reading and certainly receives my personal recommendation. Some of our new readers may not be familiar with Elizabeth's contribution to the development of Blissymbolic usage in North America. The following information is extracted from the book's jacket.

"In 1967, Elizabeth Helfman published a book for young adults called Signs and Symbols Around the World, eight pages of which were devoted to the work of Charles Bliss and his attempts to make a symbolic method of communication that could be read by people who spoke different oral languages. It was in her book that the teachers at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre, searching for a method to help their nonspeaking pupils communicate, first encountered Semantography - or, as it is now known, Blissymbolics. So Mrs. Helfman can justly claim to be one of the discoverers of this fabulous new way of opening the world to those who cannot use oral speech."

Blissymbolics - Speaking Without Speech is available from:-

Thomas Nelson Limited
81 Curlew Drive
Don Mills, Ontario
Canada, M3H 2R1
\$10.95 U.S. Funds

Elsevier-Dutton Publishing Co. Inc.
2 Park Avenue
New York, N.Y.
U.S.A., 10016
\$10.95 U.S. Funds

Alison MacDonald's report on Bliss and Makaton is a timely contribution since total communication (combined use of speech and one or more augmentatives) is a growing trend in special education. Makaton is a sign vocabulary developed in Britain as an aid in teaching sign language to the deaf and mentally retarded. For further information on language programmes with Makaton, write to Mrs. Margaret Walker, 85 Pierrefondes Avenue, Farnborough, Hampshire, England.

Mrs. Walker's Makaton leaflet informs us that, "Makaton comprises a specially selected vocabulary considered to be most essential and useful in providing language for the Mentally Handicapped. It is structured in stages of increasing complexity. The initial stages comprise basic vocabulary necessary to express essential needs, then subsequent stages expand them and more complex language concepts are introduced. The aim is to ensure that if limited learning ability and poor retention prevent an individual from progressing beyond the initial stages, then he or she will still have acquired a useful, though limited communicative language."

The next Newsletter will be published in November 1981. Have a good summer!

Barbara Rush
Editor

TREENA

By: Anne Warrick
Ottawa, Ontario

When Treena was just a few years old she moved to Rideau Regional Centre, Smith Falls, from her own home. I can well imagine her there, a severely disabled little girl, pretty, with beautifully expressive eyes her way of communicating with her world. No doubt she looked forward to outings, to visits with her family, and her eventual enrollment in school. Unfortunately, Treena had a hard time learning to read and in consequence her academic experiences were limited. During her adolescence, a Blissymbolics programme was started at Rideau Regional by Hugh Nelson and Carol MacLaughlan. Treena was selected as a suitable candidate for symbols.

I first met Treena, equipped with a Blissboard and beginning to communicate with symbols, at the Games for the Physically Disabled in Ottawa, where I almost put an end to her young life by whistling in her ear as I passed by! We were to meet again to journey together, and with Carol, to the International Rehabilitation Congress held in Winnipeg last July. I hope Treena will write her experiences of Winnipeg to the Newsletter sometime. Winnipeg was many "firsts" for Treena, aiplanes, hotels, entertainment, lectures and new friends like Sue and Elaine and Clark and Clark and Clark! There was time for us to talk, and I learnt that Treena spent much of her day teaching symbols and helping with the Blissymbol Programme at Smith Falls.

In September of this year Treena enrolled in the Blissymbolics Elementary Correspondence Course being given in Ottawa. She worked through all the assignments with her counsellor, indicating the answers on her board. She did beautifully. During our on-site sessions, I had asked Dr. Eugene McDonald, if he would discuss the psycho-social aspects of the severely disabled and non-speech systems. I invited Treena to tell us what a Blissymbolics teacher should know from a non-speakers point of view. (See following article.)

In discussion with Dr. McDonald following her presentation, Treena told us that symbols had helped her grow and mature. When she was ten years old she thought that one day she would walk and talk. At fourteen she knew that she wouldn't. She arrived at this conclusion quite alone. I am sure that with Treena involved in Blissymbols at Rideau Regional no non-speaking child will experience that alone again.

To the best of my knowledge, Treena is the first non-speaking person to have completed an elementary Workshop and received certification for that. May many more Treena's join her - we need their counsel.

Good luck Treena CONGRATULATIONS. You are a very classy young lady!

TEACHING BLISSYMBOLS

By: Treena Guy
Smith Falls, Ontario

What makes a good Blissymbol teacher? What things are important for a teacher to do to help a symbol user to communicate? I would like to try and answer these questions today. In my opinion it is very important, when you are talking to a symbol user, and you are not able to understand what is being said, don't give up; it is frustrating for us. Sometimes it is difficult for us to make you understand what we want to say, but keep trying. Don't forget to say the word after we have pointed to the Symbol, to make sure you have understood what is being said.

A teacher has to like symbols, and believe that they can work. She has to feel that the person she is working with can really learn symbols. If she doesn't believe that, the person won't learn. I think that the Blissymbol teachers, should put themselves in our place, so that they can understand what it is like to be non-verbal.

It is important to remember that each Symbol user has their own special way of talking and pointing, to say what they want. Give the symbol user time, you need to learn to understand them, so don't feel bad if you don't know what they are saying.

Before I learnt Blissymbols, I had a difficult time saying what I wanted. I use to be able to only talk with my eyes and my face, and there was really only one person who could understand my face and what I was trying to say. Now I still use my eyes and face, but with symbols more people understand me.

After I got my Bliss board I was able to go to school. Now most people understand what I am saying. I am presently working on a 1000 symbol board, and now I am able to talk about my feelings openly!

TEMPLATE IDEAS

By: Heather Wallingford
South Porcupine, Ontario

A simple method of making symbols larger - Using a magnajector (available at toy stores, Consumers, etc., for under \$15.00)

Method A

- 1) Put magnajector over desired symbol in "Blissymbols for Use"
 - 2) Stick paper to receive the symbol on the wall.
 - 3) Adjust location of magnajector and book, so that symbol projected onto the paper is the desired size.
- Trace with marker.

Method B

1. To make a large template, trace all the template shapes on a piece of paper with a fine magic marker.
2. Repeat 1, 2, 3, above but put bristol board or cardboard, etc. on the wall rather than paper.

Note: Depending on the size, you may only be able to do one shape at a time.

3. Using a scripto knife, cut out all shapes. Now you have a Blissymbols template in a larger version to make your symbols with.

SYMBOL NEWS FROM MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

By: David Reeve,
Communication Teacher
Brookmeade/Credit Valley
Treatment Centre

In the fall of 1978, The Credit Valley Treatment Centre for Children opened in Mississauga (a community lying between Toronto and Hamilton). This is a new centre for children with physical and orthopaedic handicaps. The Centre is funded by the Ontario Ministries of Health and Community and Social Services. The school portion of the Centre's program is operated by The Peel Board of Education.

The Credit Valley Treatment Centre offers a nursery school program for young children admitted for active therapy programs. The therapy staff is also involved with a large number of out-patients in the local community. The Centre offers a wide variety of evening programs for the physically handicapped: Teen Drop-In, Life Skills Club, Photography Club, Sports Training and Cross Country Skiing.

The Peel Board of Education runs a school program for children and young people who are admitted to the Centre for intensive therapy. Six Special Education teachers are employed at the Centre. A librarian and a music teacher visit the school once a week. School programs include a Kindergarten, Primary, Junior, Intermediate/Senior Classes and a Communication Withdrawal Class. At the present time there are 33 students enrolled in the school at Credit Valley.

Similar to other treatment facilities, a therapy team consisting of a physiotherapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, teacher and a social worker manage the child's therapy/educational program while attending the Credit Valley School. The Treatment Centre employs a Medical Director, a psychologist and psychiatrist on a part-time basis, who are available to assist the therapy team. The Peel School Board also offers excellent special education consulting services.

There are currently eight non-verbal cerebral palsied students in the symbol communication class at Credit Valley. These students are involved in a homeroom class with other verbal children of their own age and are withdrawn for both individual and small group sessions in the communication class. In addition, a speech therapist sees the children at least once a week for an individual treatment session.

Like the other therapy/school programs at Credit Valley, the communication class has evolved on a gradual basis, over the past two and one half years. The communication program has concentrated on the development of new language comprehension skills, as well as the extension of the student's present level of symbol vocabulary. The children have been involved in a wide variety of language activities such as games, stories, symbol worksheets, art projects, field trips and activities of daily living. A continuing goal for the program has been to provide a wide range of meaningful communication experiences outside of the formalized classroom setting. Hopefully, this will help the students to more fully integrate the world of symbols into their total life experience.

We have found when doing "symbol work" in isolation, the carry-over in terms of genuine communication with other children and adults in the school is negligible. Symbol vocabulary and symbol skills have to have a high degree of relevance and interest for the child.

We have been fortunate in having a large number of dedicated volunteers helping with the symbol program. This has allowed us to work on a one-to-one basis with the students. Volunteers have also played an important part in making symbol games, activity sheets and new communication displays. We are currently developing informal methods of training our volunteers on an ongoing basis.

Our communication program is still evolving. It has been a real learning experience for everyone involved. Training for both parents and volunteers, individualized communication displays and the development of appropriate program materials are continuing challenges for each of us involved in this task.

FROM BOOK TO BOOK

By: Elizabeth S. Helfman
Southbury, Connecticut

I am not a speech therapist or an expert on symbols or a teacher of the handicapped. Still, the story of my connection with Blissymbols may be of some interest to readers of the Newsletter.

As an author of informational books for young people, I published in 1967 a book called Signs and Symbols Around the World. In it I dealt with the various ways in which graphic signs and symbols have been used as a means of communication. I began with the cave paintings of early people and went on to such subjects as written language, religion, art, music, science, and mathematics. Most important today, I thought, was the use of signs for communication across language barriers. Surely the people of the world would understand one another better if they had a simple way of communicating in spite of language differences.

Eight pages of my book were devoted to Semantography, now known to all of us as Blissymbolics. I had discovered Charles Bliss's system of symbols in three huge mimeographed volumes in the New York Public Library. Though I was immediately fascinated, it took several trips to the library to convince me that I could make an understandable selection from this mountain of material. When I wrote to him for permission to use his symbols in my book, Mr. Bliss, who had met mostly with indifference to his work, was ecstatic. Permission was granted and Mr. Bliss sent me exact copies of the symbols I wanted to use, so that they could be accurately reproduced.

Neither Mr. Bliss nor I could possibly have foreseen what would happen as a result of my including his symbols in my book. Signs and Symbols Around the World found its way to the Toronto Public Library and it was there that Shirley McNaughton, searching for symbols to use with non-speaking children, discovered Semantography. It seemed so clear and logical; there were symbols for man, woman, child, love, joy, sadness -- so many that the children could use. Children were introduced to the available symbols right away.

In October, 1971, I received a letter from Maurice Izzard, principal of the school at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre, asking for further information about Mr. Bliss's book, which by then had been published in a revised one-volume edition. Meanwhile Mr. Bliss was contacted. Ecstatic again, he flew to Toronto from Australia to help the teachers adapt his symbols for the use of the children.

What happened after that is well known to most of the readers of this Newsletter. Children who had felt like lumps in wheelchairs discovered they were somebody after all. They could say, "I love you, Mother." They could tell someone when they were angry and they could ask questions. This meant a whole new way of thinking and feeling. It was like waking up from a long dim daydream and discovering the world.

Mr. Bliss sent me enthusiastic letters about the work being done in Toronto. I should come and see for myself, he said. The teacher would welcome me warmly and I could write a book about the children who spoke with his symbols. Please! It was a tempting proposal, but Toronto seemed far away and I did not go. (I was then living in New Paltz, New York.)

Charles Bliss, however, came to New York City on some of his trips from Australia and one time my husband and I met him there for lunch. He charmed us.

Time went on. The work with symbols was growing fast in Toronto and spreading to other places. Charles Bliss wrote me about it now and then. But I was busy with other books and did not seriously consider writing more about symbols. Then fate intervened. In midwinter, 1977, I found myself on a plane en route to Toronto, accompanying my husband who was going there for a special kind of hernia operation. I was not aware of the formation of the Blissymbolics Communication Foundation, but while I was in Toronto I phoned Mr. Izzard at the O.C.C.C. School. He welcomed me and I spent a whole morning in Nancy Lageer's classroom. This was a thrilling experience for me. Children "talked" to their teachers and to each other with symbols. They pointed if they could, but one or two could only nod their heads or roll their eyes. I did a lesson with one child myself, not very expertly, but we enjoyed each other, we made jokes.

I could see that I would have to write a book about these children and their symbols. There was no doubt about this now. Of course we went to Toronto again. I was charmed by the city and my husband, in the hospital on our first trip, had seen none of it. In June of 1977 we both visited the O.C.C.C. and were given a special showing of the film, Mr. Symbol Man. Another day I had lunch with Shirley McNaughton, who had been away at the time of my earlier trip. Later I was to attend a workshop in Blissymbolics in Philadelphia, and I went to Toronto again, to make further contacts, in 1979.

My book for young adults, Blissymbolics: Speaking Without Speech, was published in February 1981 by Elsevier/Nelson Books in New York. Three and a half years from intention to finished book! Well, this was a very complicated book to do and there were many frustrations along the way. I wanted to write, above all, about the people, both children and adults, whose lives had been transformed by being able to communicate with Blissymbols. I wanted young people, especially, to gain some insight into the lives of those who cannot communicate as they do. Perhaps some of these young people would then choose work with the handicapped as a career/

Ginny Storr and Paula Ashmead at B.C.I. worked hard in preparing the symbols for my book. Shirley McNaughton was helpful and encouraging throughout. There were so many others; I cannot name them all. I have been welcomed at the O.C.C.C. as if I were some sort of celebrity, but after all, it was not my idea to use Blissymbols for the handicapped. And, you might say, wouldn't someone have thought of using these symbols this way even without my book? Perhaps in time. But Charles Bliss's book, published by himself, was not widely available, and mine was. As it is, I am proud to have even so small a part in this work that had brought a new life to many non-speaking people.

I am now living in Southbury, Connecticut. I had not been here long when I was told that Blissymbols were in use at the Southbury Training School -- right here! I went to see and found that two cerebral palsied women had been taught the symbols by a speech therapist who had then been transferred to other work. She had made a special symbol display for each of the women, drawing the symbols expertly with a template. But there was no one to continue the work. So, for the rest of the school year I went in once a week and worked with these women. I have written a little in my book about one of them, Gerry Haycock. No part of Gerry's body works well except one leg, so she lifts that up and points quite precisely to symbols with her big toe. I have also distributed countless folders about B.C.I. and have talked about Blissymbolics informally to groups of teachers.

Blissymbols, as you can see, have a very special place in my life.

INTRODUCING BLISSYMBOLS TO A YOUNG ADULT - AN EXPERIENCE FROM FRANCE

(Since the author wishes this client to remain anonymous, the name of the author and centre is withheld.....Ed.)

Michel came to our center in September 1979, at the age of 19. He is a young man of normal intelligence, with severe quadriplegia and a total absence of spoken language. He is totally dependent on others. Michel had spent most of his life at home, a trial school placement at age six years having proved a failure. For his parents, Michel's present admission to our centre is primarily in order for him to have contact with other people, and to learn to read. The need for a means of communication is not mentioned by them.

Michel was placed in a reading readiness class on a half-time basis, and also began speech therapy, where our first goal was to give him a means of communication. We showed Michel our "carnet de communication" (a booklet of drawings designed to allow a simple level of communication), but he was not interested in using it. At the same time, we began to assess his potential for speech. Although Michel is able to produce isolated sounds, he has great difficulty putting together consonants and vowels to form syllables or words. His difficulties increase when trying to speak spontaneously, as opposed to imitating a syllable or word.

In January 1980, realizing that traditional speech therapy would not lead to functional speech, and that Michel would probably have to leave the centre in July because of his age, we decided to teach him Blissymbolics. A speech therapist had attended a Blissymbol workshop in Quebec in September, 1979. Right from the start, Blissymbols interested Michel, and he began to learn them quickly. However, we faced the problem of finding a simple method for him to access the symbols. Several attempts were made before, in collaboration with the occupational therapist, we settled on a satisfactory coded display. Michel points with his right thumb to two numbers corresponding to the desired symbol. In addition to our work with Michel, an in-service for staff was organized, and symbols were posted in various parts of the school.

Blissymbol instruction is undertaken in Speech Therapy. We take into consideration Michel's requests for specific symbols in order to maintain his motivation. This occasionally poses problems for us. Introducing the symbols "like", "want", and "wish" too quickly caused some confusion, and when he wanted the symbol for "drool", we found it did not exist. Because of Michel's constant requests for new symbols, and the rapidity with which he is learning them, we are becoming increasingly aware of the limits of the available symbol vocabulary. In addition, his level of language development appears superior to the expressive capabilities Michhis sentences is needed.

Michel quickly learned 200 symbols and, without having learned the "combine" strategy, he uses it spontaneously. The examples of conversation that follow this article illustrate the development of his communication abilities over a period of six months. His preoccupation with his physical limitations, his fear of the future, wish for death, and difficulties experienced within his family, become dominant themes as he becomes better able to express his feelings.

On his arrival in our centre, Michel was very isolated and even a little rejected by the other youngsters. At the same time, he seemed to scorn them a little. Gradually Michel has become more relaxed, opened up, and because of this he is much better accepted by the teachers and others. Michel now communicates with other young people in his group, with various staff members, and with his family. At home, he has at last been able to project his own unique personality.

Giving a means of communication to a young man of nineteen who until then could not express himself, is fascinating and a unique experience. But before embarking on such a project, one must realize that what will be communicated will not be banal, and we must therefore be prepared to assume the responsibility of dealing with the feelings, desires, and preoccupations of our clients.

.....

INTRODUCTION DU SYSTÈME BLISS AUPRÈS D'UN JEUNE ADULTE

Michel arrive au Centre en septembre 1979; il a 19 ans, il présente une quadriplégie sévère, une absence totale de langage oral, une incontinence salivaire et une intelligence normale. Il est totalement dépendant de l'adulte.

Michele est toujours resté chez lui. Un essai de placement, à l'âge de 6 ans, fut un échec.

D'après les parents, Michel est placé pour avoir des contacts avec d'autres jeunes et pour une tentative d'apprentissage de la lecture. Mais, ils n'en parlent pas du tout comme d'un éventuel moyen de communication.

Michel est placé dans une classe d'apprentissage de la lecture, à mi-temps. Il est pris en orthophonie. En même temps que l'apprentissage des lettres, nous lui proposons notre "carnet de communication" (dessins à désigner permettant une communication courante et simple). Notre but premier est, en effet, de lui donner un moyen de communication. Mais Michel n'a pas voulu utiliser ce carnet.

L'apprentissage des sons isolés se passe bien, et nous insistons sur l'évocation des syllabes et des mots. Des difficultés sérieuses apparaissent quand on aborde l'association consomevoyelle, et elles sont plus importantes en évocation qu'en dictée.

En janvier 1980, du fait de ces difficultés et du fait que Michel devait partir en juillet 80, (limite d'âge), nous décidons de lui enseigner les symboles Bliss, une orthophoniste ayant suivi un atelier Bliss en octobre 79. Tout de suite, le système plaît à Michel. L'apprentissage des symboles est rapide.

Dès le début, se pose le problème de trouver, avec l'ergothérapeute, un moyen pour désigner les symboles.

Plusieurs essais sont faits, avant d'arriver à un tableau solide, bien fixé et satisfaisant. Michel pointe avec le pouce droit, deux chiffres pour désigner un symbole. (Chaque symbole est numéroté). Nous sensibilisons l'ensemble du personnel du Centre en mettant des symboles un peu partout sur les portes et en donnant une information sur le système Bliss.

L'apprentissage lui-même se fait en orthophonie. Nous considérons les désirs de Michel afin de le motiver au maximum. Mais ceci pose parfois de problèmes. Par exemple: (aimer-vouloir-souhaiter), qui ont occasionné des confusions. Ou (baver) qui, à notre connaissance n'existe pas.

D'une façon générale, nous nous heurtons sans cesse au manque de vocabulaire, à la demande incessante et rapide de nouveaux symboles de la part de Michel. Le niveau de langage semble supérieur à ce que les symboles connus permettent d'exprimer. Un travail au niveau de la structure des phrases est nécessaire. Michel a rapidement 200 symboles à sa disposition. Sans avoir appris l'indicateur de combinaison, il utilise cette possibilité spontanément.

Voici quelques exemples de phrases spontanées pour montrer l'évolution de la communication de ce jeune adulte. (Voir phrases en symboles). Michel communique avec les jeunes de son groupe, avec les différentes personnes qui s'occupent de lui et avec les membres de sa famille.

A son arrivée, Michel était très isolé et même, un peu rejeté par les autres jeunes. En même temps, il semblait les mépriser un peu. Peu à peu, Michel s'est détendu, ouvert et, de ce fait, il a été beaucoup mieux accepté, et par les jeunes, et par les éducateurs. Nous pensons que les symboles Bliss sont les principaux responsables de cette bonne évolution de Michel. En famille, Michel a enfin pu montrer sa véritable personnalité. Donner un moyen de communiquer à un garçon de 19 ans, qui jusqu'alors, ne pouvait s'exprimer est merveilleux et passionnant; mais, il faut savoir que ce qui va être dit ne sera pas banal, et qu'il faudra l'assumer: problème du handicap, peur de l'avenir, désir de mort, difficultés dans la famille.

See symbols next page.

(B) indicates - 1) a symbol which differs from the C.K.Bliss version either in symbol form or accompanying wording, or 2) a new BCI symbol authorized in the absence of requested comment from C.K.Bliss.

Material from symbol users is reproduced essentially as submitted in order to reflect individual creativity and different styles for expression or instruction. Neither symbols nor usage are to be regarded as models for expression or instruction.

The symbol composition and drawing have been updated to conform to Blissymbols For Use.

Although the combine strategy is frequently employed to arrive at new symbol expressions, the personal symbol creation is often not enclosed between combine indicators as required by BCI practice.

1.
 The pictograph consists of a vertical line with a horizontal bar at the bottom, followed by a heart shape with an exclamation mark inside, and a house shape with a circle inside.
- J'aime ce film.
I like this film.

Je vouloir pays
I to want country

2.
 The pictograph consists of a vertical line with a horizontal bar at the bottom, followed by a heart shape with a right curly bracket inside, and a square shape with a horizontal bar at the bottom.
- Je veux voir des pays.
I want to see other countries.

Avril / April 1980

Quoi travailler père
What to work father

3.
 The pictograph consists of a question mark inside a square, followed by a triangle with an arrow pointing up, and a stick figure with an arrow pointing up.
- Que fait ton père?
What does your father do?

Homme penser parler ne...pas
Man to think to speak not

4.
 The pictograph consists of a stick figure, a semi-circle with an arrow pointing up, a circle with an arrow pointing up, and a minus sign followed by an exclamation mark.
- L'homme pense même si il ne parle pas.
Man thinks though he may not speak.

Mai / May 1980

Est-ce-que tu voir homme pays
Question you to see man country

5.
 The pictograph consists of a question mark inside a square, followed by a vertical line with a horizontal bar at the bottom and the number 2, a circle with a dot inside, a stick figure, and a square with a horizontal bar at the bottom.
- Est-ce-que tu vois (connais) Tito?
Do you see (know) Tito?

Père mère aller voyage auto
Father mother to go trip car

6.
 The pictograph consists of a stick figure, a triangle with an arrow pointing up, a triangle with an arrow pointing up, a circle with a cross inside, and a square with a cross inside.
- Mon père et mère vont en voyage en auto.
My father and mother are going on a trip by car.

Mère aimer moi comprendre ne...pas seul
Mother to like me to understand not alone

7. +! -! -

Ma mère m'aime (mais) ne comprend pas que je veuille être seul.
My mother loves me but doesn't understand that I want to be alone.

Père comprendre ne...pas vouloir sens contraire de vivre
Father to understand not want opposite meaning to live

8. -! }

Mon père ne comprend pas (qu'on) veuille mourir.
My father doesn't understand that one could want to die.

Je avoir besoin aider vivre seul sens contraire de vie vouloir.
I to need to help to live alone opposite meaning to live to want

9. -

J'ai besoin d'être aidé pour vivre seul, je veux la mort.
I need help in order to live alone. I want to die.

Ami je avoir besoin
Friend I need

10. +!

J'ai besoin d'amis.
I need friends.

Mère parler moi. Hommes parler moi
Mother to talk me. Men to talk me

(en rentrant de vacances
et au sujet de son
tableau de symboles)

11.

Ma mère a parlé avec moi. Les gens ont parlé avec moi.
My mother talked with me. People talked with me.

(speaking about his
Blissymbol display on his
return to school after
the summer holidays)

Je heureux
I happy

12.

Je suis heureux.
I am happy.

BLISS ON THE MOVE

By: Carolyn Anderson,
Scottish Council for Spastics.

(This article is reproduced with permission from the British Newsletter, September 1980.....Ed.)

I would like to share some of my views on Bliss symbols in the community in case anyone else is having similar experiences and/or problems in their jobs.

In January 1978, I moved from the Scottish Council for Spastics in Edinburgh to the Mobile Therapy Unit in Paisley. The unit consists of four Physiotherapists, two Occupational Therapists and one Speech Therapist (me), and covers the West of Scotland. Each Therapist has her own car, and we visit Cerebral Palsied children and adults referred to the Council in their homes, schools and centres. The aim is to provide support and advice to parents on the care and handling of their child. My caseload is approximately sixty patients and of this number, ten adults and eight children are currently using Bliss symbols.

My first problems with Bliss came when I discovered that a fully-equipped Speech Therapy department would not fit in the car. Only one bag could go with me if I was not to present a daunting sight at peoples' front doors. Standard therapy equipment for Bliss is therefore a 12" x 12" bag which doubles as a "Feelie" bag. This holds toy objects (man, lady, boy, girl, house, car, horse, cup, plate, spoon, etc.), two small cloths for hiding games, four coloured blocks with symbols on for rolling sentences, Ladybird pictures to correspond with the toy objects, and the LDA action cards, Set 1 and 2. Other LDA and DLM sets for opposites, sequencing and categorizing, etc. are used as needed. Homemade "Action" pictures which move are used to teach the concept of action. Since visits may be infrequent, "homework" is often left for the Bliss user to do with parents and teachers. A diary of special events using the symbols where possible is useful and to see how much the user can communicate to me using his board.

It became evident early on with symbols that most children can learn them fairly easily, although their levels of communication in actually using Bliss may vary widely. What had not been clear to me in the relatively sheltered environment of the schools in Edinburgh was that Bliss is not as easy for people in the child's environment as I had assumed. A much greater proportion of time is needed to be spent in teaching those people most directly involved with the child how to use the board. Initially, this involved acceptance of the board which in many cases was more difficult than I had expected since I had always thought that one of the main advantages of Bliss was that the English was under or above each symbol, and the symbols themselves did not need to be learned by anyone other than the child. The main objections to the boards seem to be their visual presentation; they just look too confusing and complicated to

anyone unfamiliar with their use. This puts many people off - especially if the Bliss user is not highly skilled in using the board. Many of the children I started on Bliss had developed some form of communication with their immediate family usually in the form of gross gesture and/or eye-pointing to express needs. Many parents felt initially that gesture was much more acceptable than Bliss, even though the child could only make a few gestures due to poor hand function. With older children and adults who can spell, an alphabet board seems to be more acceptable than a Bliss board even if it takes longer to spell out each word, because it is easier for most people to relate to than this unusual looking multi-coloured board.

If it can be demonstrated to the parents that using the symbols is quicker than a "Twenty Questions" approach, then the board has a good chance of being used at home. Often it becomes obvious that the previous non-verbal communication between mother and child is adequate for daily needs and the board is only used at school or for "homework" or occasionally if another member of the family cannot understand the child's non-verbal communication. Use of the board is also less at home if the child has some speech, since, no matter how unintelligible it sounds to outsiders, it can usually be interpreted by some family members. Speech will usually be preferred by the child since this is a much more "normal" communication and the symbols used only after severe frustration with an attempt at verbal communication.

Using Bliss becomes more complicated for the user and the receiver when strategies are involved. With children I often find that the "opposite" strategy is more difficult to teach than the "combine symbol. It is sometimes helpful to start the opposite concept by putting each opposite in a separate square on the board and only much later making "cold" for example, into two separate symbols. A full explanation of how the opposite and other strategies are used may need to be added to the board, as well as the child's name and how he indicates, etc. as the use of strategies is not well explained on the board.

One final problem I encounter is with children who access by eye-pointing. It is usually fairly easy to find a code which the child can use to indicate the symbols, whether this involves colour, letter, number coding, etc. The problem again is the receiver and how to make the child's indication "concrete" enough to be recognized by the receiver. Often this means slowing the child down with his eye-pointing as it may be too fast for someone not familiar with the system and teaching him to be aware of when he is not being understood because he is too quick for his receiver. In some cases, it has been necessary to go back to using Technology, for example, a Chailey communicator, not for the user, but to indicate unequivocally to the receiver which symbol the user is indicating.

CASE STUDY EYE-POINTER - SPASTIC QUADRIPLÉGIC

By: Anne Banton, O.T.R.
Forest Park School
Florida, U.S.A.

Deshawn is a 10.9 year old who has attended Forrest Park School since the age of three, receiving physical, occupational and speech therapy. Deshawn has a great deal of physical involvement with a diagnosis of cerebral palsy - spastic quad. Following six years of therapy she still had no functional sounds nor functional use of her upper or lower extremities, even with positioning.

During the 1978 school year mounting concern existed regarding the next step for therapeutic and academic intervention. Feelings were mixed throughout the staff as to Deshawn's academic potential, but all felt there had to be some way to facilitate communication.

Deshawn is an eye pointer. Communication using eye movement was established due to her physical involvement. It proved successful, as even head movement resulted in a change in her body position, further inhibiting functional movement.

Before a training program could begin for Deshawn a consistent yes/no response needed to be established. To do this, a yes Bliss symbol was taped to her right armrest and a no to the left - utilizing eye movement. Each discipline was to ask yes/no questions and require an eye pointed answer. During this time plans for an adapted lapboard were also underway. The task was a challenge due to the exaggerated flexion of the lower extremities, stiffness in the upper extremities and semi-reclined posture. Following trial and error a lapboard was constructed. It consisted of a flat board held on the chair with the metal uprights from the armrests. This fits into the armrests upright, keeping the board secure. A pad was added to the underside of the lapboard to keep her knees from hitting the bottom of the board.

An E-tran was then fabricated to fit on the front of the board for her symbols. Occupational therapy began working with her in May of 1978, three times weekly with initial emphasis placed on establishing the consistent yes/no response and progressed as follows:-

- Establishment of two gross eye pointing positions of the E-Tran using yes/no.
- Establishment of colour associations with response positions. An association between color on the lapboard and corresponding dot on the E-Tran.
- Establishment of twelve eye pointing positions on the E-Tran.

- Matching:

- 1) 10 colours using eye pointing on the E-Tran.
- 2) shapes, shapes of the same size but different colours. Then the same colour and size were tried.
- 3) matching objects of the same color - increasing from 2 - 4 objects.
- 4) match pictures of common objects, people and animals.
- 5) match pictures - small pictures were used with internal differences. Four to five different choices at a time.

The kinesthetic approach was also initiated for matching. Deshawn's arms were moved through the shape (around the object, in the air, or on sand paper) or by watching the therapist draw a shape. Deshawn currently has 50 - 60 symbols on her E-Tran.

When talking with Deshawn the "listener" stands in front of Deshawn and responds to her eye pointing cues. Deshawn will look to the quadrant containing the symbol needed. Then the "listener" points to and verbalizes the response to insure the correct quadrant has been located on the E-Tran. Deshawn then looks back to the midline before indicating by eye pointing to the position of the symbol within the quadrant, using colour coding. The "listener" points to and says the colour, reinforcing that the position is correct. Thus the symbol is identified within the quadrant and the response, need or feeling has been expressed.

The most dramatic change has been noted in personality. Deshawn has verbalized more sounds and actively participates in classroom activities. There is no longer any question as to her benefiting from school.

In the fall of 1979 it was identified by an opthamologist that Deshawn was hyperopic (farsighted). The ease in determining her need for glasses was greatly increased by her ability to indicate yes/no response.

Throughout the school year Deshawn received speech on a consultive basis, physical therapy three times weekly and occupational therapy two times weekly. Emphasis in occupational therapy was directed towards: 1)visual discrimination - attending to the symbol parts rather than learning symbols from their position on the E-Tran.

- 2) figure ground activities, and
- 3) visual memory activities.

Deshawn is presently attending a school for trainable mentally retarded and successfully made the transition to a new school and class.

BLISSYMBOLICS - A VERBAL CHILD'S VIEWPOINT

By: Glen Crawford
Islington Public School
Toronto, Ontario

(The following article is part of a class project in response to a presentation by B.C.I.....Ed.)

When I first heard that we were going to have a person come in to explain about Blissymbolics, I was very curious as I did not know a thing about them.

So when Miss Powell came in from Blissymbolics, we were naturally anxious for the lesson to begin. The first part consisted of a video tape about a boy in Toronto who is confined to a wheelchair and his livelyhood (sic) despite his handicap.

In the second part, we were informed of the history of the Blissymbolics system (Charles Bliss's book right up to now) and we were told about what symbols mean and how punctuation is used, etc. We soon discovered that the system is logical and therefore easy to learn and use. But we were somewhat less brave when the idea of using them ourselves came up. But soon we were conversing freely, but in absolute silence as do people to which it is a necessity.

As a follow-up, our class has been conversing in Blissymbolics occasionally and we are designing a Bliss Board we feel would be more useful to adolescents trying to communicate with each other.

I feel this is an excellent programme in all ways to which more people should be exposed.

A COMBINED BLISS AND MAKATON PROGRAMME

By: Alison MacDonald
Scottish Council for Spastics

Both Blissymbolics and the Makaton Vocabulary have particular merits for different types of children, but there would appear to be several situations where a combined Bliss/Makaton programme might well be appreciated -

- a) The severely mentally handicapped child with poor hand function.
- b) The cerebral palsied child with congenital auditory imperception or profound deafness.

The Makaton Vocabulary is, to quote Margaret Walker, "...a vocabulary, which has been specially designed to provide a controlled method of teaching British Sign Language (BSL) and is generally associated with it. The vocabulary provides a complete language scheme and, therefore, could, if required, be used with other non-verbal systems of communication which lack a developmental language teaching structure." There are other manual signing systems being used with non-oral children, each with its own particular merits, but Makaton/BSL is very easy to learn and has one important advantage in that it is a system already firmly established throughout Britain and known by the majority of profoundly deaf people, their relatives and friends.

There is absolutely no reason for Bliss and Makaton to be seen as rivals, because they fulfil slightly different needs and are in many ways very nicely complementary to each other. Bliss is obviously the medium of choice for those with poor hand function and it has the great advantage of having a written word accompanying each symbol, so that it can be understood by strangers. It is also static and can, therefore, be used to label objects, caption drawings and provide a written record of a child's output. Makaton is more transient but would appear to be a more spontaneous and natural medium for severely mentally handicapped people, gesture being a more primitive form of language. It also has the advantage for the mobile (particularly hyperactive) child in that his hands are always with him and he does not need to carry a chart around.

The Severely Mentally Handicapped Child

The first chart shows some results which helped to foster my interest in putting the two systems together:- This was drawn up by an Edinburgh Speech Therapist, Ruth Rosie, who was working with profoundly mentally handicapped children.

See Chart I

One can see from these results that with only one exception the children seem to prefer to communicate through gesture rather than by symbols. They are obviously quite capable of learning a very commendable number of symbols which they are able to use in structured situations, but they seem to be failing to grasp the full communicative function of Bliss, i.e. that they can convey functional information through this third party.

That chart was shown and discussed at a Bliss Follow-up meeting in Edinburgh and from the discussion that followed it seemed clear that many people felt that despite these results Bliss was in no way a waste of time with this level of handicap. It was felt that there were several advantages to be gained from a Bliss programme even if the most hoped for one (functional communication) was the least successful:-

1. It provides an excellent visual non-transient framework for language work.
2. It is a useful tool in the teaching of basic concepts.
3. It is useful for teaching a child to categorise (e.g. animals, food, containers, etc.)
4. It helps visual perceptual development (possibly as a pre-reading stage).

Clearly, therefore, Bliss may have a lot to offer, although it seems that most low grade children will prefer to use gesture for their immediate needs. If this is so, then perhaps it is important to recognise this early on and to guide these children and their families towards a standardised manual system to complement the symbol programme rather than letting each child go off at a tangent on his own idiosyncratic gesture system which cannot be understood outside his family.

A second interesting point shown up by the chart is that severely subnormal children may fail to use the chart appropriately, but they do not have problems in learning the symbols themselves. This would seem to indicate that it is not necessary to embellish symbols initially to provide more pictorial clues.

The Child with Auditory Perceptual Problems

The two children discussed here both have additional physical handicaps. They both attend a school run by the Scottish Council for Spastics, for Cerebral Palsied children of lower than normal intelligence. The school provides intensive speech therapy and both boys are seen daily either individually or together. Three speech therapists are involved, Shirley Ferguson, Sally Millar and myself. This has been particularly helpful as we have been able to put our heads together over our approach. All the therapists are trained in the use of both Bliss and Makaton and in-service sessions have been provided for the school staff.

M. - aged 10 3/4 years, double hemiplegia, fully ambulant, but with poor hand function and associated movement (or mirroring) of the opposite side so that when he does something with one hand the other tends to make the same movements.

M. is moderately mentally handicapped, has poor feeding patterns and severe bulbar involvement of the speech muscles, but above all, a severe auditory perceptual problem, so that despite normal hearing tests, his comprehension of language has failed to develop beyond a few common commands, e.g. "wash your hands", etc.

Two and a half years ago a recent colleague, Clare Goddard, started him on Bliss and by last summer he was using a 200 chart, although he is not yet coping with some of the very abstract concepts. We began to feel, however, that communication lacked spontaneity because every time we wanted to say something to M. we had to spread out a Bliss chart, and we felt that if we could have a more immediate input channel this would normalise conversations a little bit, even if M.'s hand function proved too poor for him to do much signing to us.

We were helped to make the decision to start Makaton with him last September, by the arrival of R. - aged 7, athetoid and very mobile. R. seemed also to be a case of congenital auditory imperception. His level of hearing is very inconsistent and fairly selective. He has virtually no demonstrable understanding of speech and no expressive speech other than (mmm) for cars. Intelligence - on non-verbal tasks he scored mainly between a 4 and 6 year old level. He had reached the age of 7 yrs., with no channel for communication, and not unnaturally we found we had a very frustrated and poorly controlled child on our hands.

Once again we felt that here was a very mobile child, who had never learned to stop and concentrate, for whom a quick and immediate input medium was needed. His hand function is affected by dyskinetic movements and he cannot tolerate much failure, so it seemed important for him to have more permanent visual display with which to back up his signing.

M. already had a 200 symbol chart, and after a few weeks of individual symbol cards and matching them to a 100 chart we decided to put R. straight on to a 200 chart because it gave access to vocabulary that was more parallel to the early Makaton stages and also more suitable to R.'s needs - i.e. he obviously needed a lot of concrete vocabulary from which one could gradually explain the more abstract concepts. Instead of masking off the symbols he had not learnt, we started with a white chart and we colour coded each symbol appropriately as he learned it. Using the Bliss 200 symbol chart vocabulary as much as possible we tried to stick to Margaret Walker's Makaton stages. There are times, however, when we have introduced vocabulary from later stages in order to make use of natural situations that have arisen. This is mainly due to the fact that as children with congenital auditory imperception, they are very visually aware and also probably brighter than the majority of mentally handicapped Makaton users. For example, R. was fascinated by similarities, so the signs for "same" and "different" (stage 6) were introduced while he was still learning stage 3 vocabulary. Another factor that has influenced vocabulary selection is that Bliss deals more in generic terms (food, animal, etc.) whereas Makaton has a lot of specifics (biscuit, jam, sugar, cake, etc.) This specific vocabulary is often very important for the severely mentally handicapped child, but we felt that these two particular children urgently needed some gross general meanings to bypass their comprehension barrier and that so long as they had a general term to give them access to communication on a subject then the specific vocabulary could come later, e.g. neither child is particularly interested in food, so having given them both the sign and symbol for "food" we omitted "jam", "sugar", etc. in the early stages, and progressed more quickly on to stages 3 and 4. This divergence between the two systems has not so far been a problem, and in fact classification has been greatly helped by being able to use the two together - e.g. we might draw the symbol for "animal" and then use signing to talk about specific animals.

In order to compare the vocabulary selection I have tried to code a 200 symbol Bliss chart in order to show the distribution.

There are Makaton parallels to most of the Bliss vocabulary. If one can get the child to the Bliss level of using strategies such as action, opposite meaning and simple combining, then the two systems become much more parallel because Makaton vocabulary which is not directly represented on the 200 chart becomes accessible in Bliss. This does of course mean that some ideas that are simple to convey in Makaton need a somewhat higher level of functioning in Bliss.

Bliss or Makaton First

M. was already well launched on Bliss, so obviously we started by using Bliss as the channel to teach Makaton. With R. however, we were undecided as to whether we should consistently teach one system before the other. In the event our approach just came naturally depending on which system seemed to have the most directly representational way of conveying the meaning being taught.

Nouns were learnt very quickly in both systems and a lot of games were played matching sign to symbol and v.v. Many nouns, however, are very pictorial in Bliss so they have been taught first and then used to teach the manual sign. e.g. - most of the people, school, water, sun, tree.

Verbs, however, are much more easily conveyed in Makaton because of the dynamic quality of signing.

Past/future tenses and time concept, however, are difficult to convey by any means to a child with no understanding of spoken language, and Bliss is being very helpful here. I made out a pictorial speech therapy timetable using photographs and symbols. Both boys are seen individually by different therapists on different days and are sometimes taken together, so photographs of the appropriate combination of child and therapist were displayed on a chart of the week. The boys help to move the symbol for today along a velcro strip each day and the past and future symbols are also adjusted accordingly.

Adjectives seem to be roughly divided depending on how pictorially the meaning is conveyed in the symbol - so that big/little/long/happy/sad were taught in Bliss first, while most other adjectives were initially presented in Makaton.










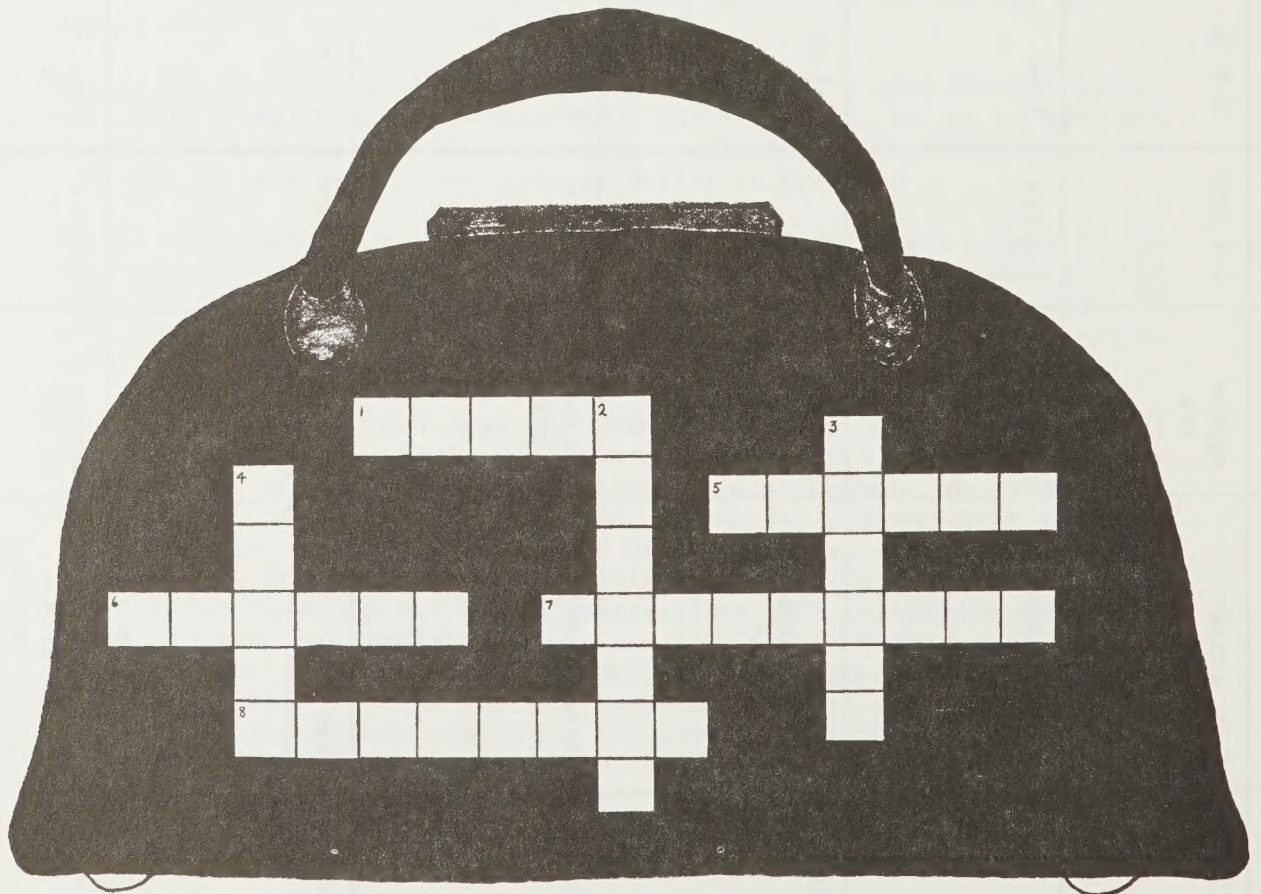
Questioning - this is a fairly advanced concept in Bliss, but in Makaton the fact that you can incorporate facial expression within the gesture itself helps to convey the meaning.

Social Words - Once again Makaton seems to provide a more natural medium for these - hello/goodbye/please/thank you - in fact, so far we have not taught these concepts in Bliss, but have signed them in situations where they can be used as a normal part of social integration.

So far there are quite a lot of words that have only been taught in one system or the other, either because they only appear in one system at this level, but have still been thought to be useful to present immediately, or else because the word is conceptually much more difficult in one system than the other.

At the present time, both boys are communicating through a combination of signs and symbols, M. showing a slight preference for signing although his execution of signs is fairly poor, and R. a preference for Bliss. The introduction of signing in a school which is predominantly oriented towards Bliss, has meant that the boys can be very much more easily accommodated in group activities within the classroom. The therapist or teacher can accompany her verbal instructions with signing in situations where to stop and explain things on the Bliss chart would be time consuming and disruptive for the rest of the class. So far it would appear that the children are not confused by this dual approach, but rather that one medium reinforces the other. The parents also seem to appreciate this two-medium access to their "locked in" children.

Name	Age	Medical	Dev. age level	Reynall Scores (before Bliss)		Communication Disorder	Time on Bliss	Results
				Compr.	Exp.			
K.	15 yrs	C.P. ataxic diplegia	approx 4 yrs	4.4 yrs	6-9 ms	Dysarthria	1 yr	90 symbols. Would very occasionally use spontaneously, but preferred own gestures. Could describe picture using 2-3 symbols.
P.	9 yrs	M.H. of unknown origin	approx 2½-3 yrs	3.2 yrs	1 yr	Dyspraxia	10 ms	67 symbols. Began to use some gesture spontaneously but was self-conscious with Bliss. Could play dominoes, bingo, snap in Bliss.
G.E.	8½ yrs	C.P. quadriplegia	approx 3 yrs	not poss	6-9 ms	Profound sensory-neural deafness	18 ms	30 symbols. Very slow progress. Poor attender. Prefers own gesture. Recently began to indicate hello/goodbye. Will match pictures to both gesture and symbol.
G.H.	8½ yrs	Microcephaly	approx 3 yrs	3.6 yrs	1.9 yrs	Dyspraxia	18ms	70 symbols. Rarely uses them spontaneously Will match 2 symbol phrase to picture. Speech has improved - longer phrases and more vocalisation. Enjoys using colours on Bliss chart.
P.	6½ yrs	Down's syndrome	approx 2½ yrs	1.4 yrs	1.5 yrs	Severe auditory discrimination difficulties	1 yr	90 symbols. Uses Bliss spontaneously. Mainly single symbols but recently up to 4 symbol string Behaviour improved. Uses two-way total communication by speech, Bliss and gesture.
F.	5 yrs	C.P. ataxic with bulbar involvt.	approx 2½ yrs	2.9 yrs	9 ms - 1 yr	Dysarthria	4 ms	30 symbols. Will picture and word match when encouraged. No spontaneous use. Began to use some gesture spontaneously.

Across1.  5.   6.  7.  8.   Down2.   3.   4.   *(submitted by Ottawa Crippled Children's Centre)*

Across: (1) pilot (5) grocer (6) farmer (7) scientist (8) engineer
Down: (2) teacher (3) doctor (4) nurse

